

All We Have, All We Want, and
Why Time Travel Actually Kind of
Sucks

By Owen Sullivan

Characters (in order of appearance):

David: 23, anxious, controlling, nerdy, somewhat meek.

Taru: A nasally, weary, annoyed, snarky, jaded time travel spirit.

Sally: David's mother. Laid back hippie type.

Martin: David's father. Loose vibe. Shows his favoritism. Always barefoot.

Erin: David's sister. Demonic sociopath. That's how she'd describe herself at least.

Henry: The confident older brother. Certain, intelligent, and caring.

Setting: The Present. Now.

Location: Upstate New York. A house in the woods.

For David and Abraham

Darkness.

*Light creeps in, as
DAVID walks onstage,
unsure of what's
happening.*

DAVID
Taru?!

*His voice echoes
through the void.*

DAVID (cont'd)
Taru where are you? Where did you take me?

*A booming, nasally
voice startles
David.*

TARU (V.O.)
I warned you, David.

*David spins, looking
for the source of
the voice.*

DAVID
Taru, where are you?

TARU (V.O.)
I told you over and over again Davey boy. *Don't fuck with time.*

DAVID
Oh yeah, says the **time-traveling** spirit who let me.

TARU (V.O.)
Screw you! This is all on you. I *trusted you*, I gave you a final
favor, and you took advantage of that.

DAVID
I can *fix this!* I can make everything right!

TARU (V.O.)

Your version of 'right' will result in *nothing* but pain!

DAVID

Doing it my way has worked pretty well so far!

TARU (V.O.)

You blew up the world!

DAVID

Well it had before now, at least! You can't blame me for trying.

TARU (V.O.)

You are selfish, David. You try to wrestle control from forces infinitely beyond you.

DAVID

Yeah, I know, just...will you let me make this right?

TARU (V.O.)

That will depend on what you call *right*, David. But first you must ask yourself; are you willing to *face your fears*?

*Two hands reach out
from the darkness
and pull David into
the dark.*

NOW.

*The living room of a
small house. The
walls are covered by
light blue wallpaper
covered with
intricate spades. A
large window on the
back wall shows the
trees outside,
revealing this house
is deep in the lush,
bright, green woods.*

A couch sits in the middle of the room, with a chair next to it. A set of cabinets sit against the back wall. And all around the room, boxes.

Cardboard moving boxes create a minefield of what was once a living room, as other boxes, full of plates, books, clothes, and other items sit against the wall, ready to go.

To stage left is the front door, and to stage right are the stairs that lead to the second floor and the doorway to the kitchen. The lights fade and a spotlight forms up center stage.

A diner booth is moved into the spotlight, and SALLY and DAVID take a seat.

Sounds of a busy diner, plates CLANKING and people MURMURING are heard.

*David plays with his
fork.*

SALLY
How was the food?

DAVID
Good.

SALLY
(pause) Figured you didn't have time to eat before the bus. *(pause, chuckle)* We also don't have much food at home. Fridge is already in the moving truck. *(pause)* We've been eating nothing but take out and canned food for the last three days.

DAVID
No complaints from me. This place's always been good.

SALLY
So how was the ride up from New York?

DAVID
Long. Traffic was bad. Plus there was a kid who uh, liked to scream and a mom who didn't really care.

SALLY
Yikes. *(beat, cheery)* Well at least you made it up here.

DAVID
Yup.

SALLY
I figured you'd wanna say goodbye to the house before we left.

DAVID
(matter-of-fact) That I do.

SALLY
It'll be good for you. An exercise in...letting things go.

DAVID
Hmph.

SALLY
Job going well?

DAVID
It's fine.

SALLY
What're you doing there? And what's it called again? Rein-star?

DAVID
Rein-star. And I'm just a code jockey. Entry-level, basic stuff.

SALLY
That's good! And, so...what are you actually *doing* there, what are you making?

DAVID
(sigh) An identification extension that allows users to more quickly and efficiently recover pertinent information when attempting to log in to their accounts.

SALLY
So...so is that...a "forgot my password" button?

DAVID
Yup. Real important work, right?

SALLY
No! No, that's great David! *(beat)* You're still young. You've only been there for a couple months. *(beat)* You don't get to do any important work until you're 30.

David cocks his eyebrows almost to say "no kidding".

SALLY (cont'd)
I spent my twenties climbing *trees*. Mainly because I was the only one on the team with functioning hips. *(pause)* So how's this project going then?

DAVID

Oh, well. We're actually experimenting with an idea I had, but it's-it's not gonna work.

SALLY

Oh, that's great!...Who knows, maybe it will. Either way, you'll figure it out. You could always ask your dad for help.

DAVID

No, it's fine. That's...no. Yeah. I'm fine. *(pause)* So why are you leaving now? Thought you were moving on the 6th.

SALLY

We're moving *into the house* on the 6th, but the realtor has a buyer *now*, so we're leaving a week early and hit the road. We're thinking of hitting Rushmore, Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, y'know, enjoy the country's sights instead of just driving across it. Then once we get to Cali, Erin'll stay with us for a few days until she heads down, *(lament)* alone, to college.

DAVID

Alone? She's moving into her dorm by herself?

SALLY

(annoyed) She wants to. But not if I have anything to say about it.

DAVID

She is *technically* an adult, she can do what she wants.

SALLY

She just wants to get a rise out of me. That or she's *embarrassed* of me.

DAVID

Can't imagine why. It's not like you've ever given us a reason for that to be true.

SALLY

"Oh, schmoopy! I'll miss you! Don't forget to write home and wash yah underwears"!

DAVID

I can still remember that one girl's side eye at me. Couldn't tell if she hated or pitied me.

SALLY

Hah! *(beat)* Oh, by the way, the new house, it's a great location. I honestly don't know how we managed to get it. View of the bridge and everything, only a ten-minute walk from my new job with the National Park Service, and a fifteen-minute drive to your dad's new office at Llama.

Sally takes out her phone.

SALLY (cont'd)

Hold on, I've got a photo of it somewhere. Look at the view we got.

DAVID

Llama really is a terrible name for a tech company.

SALLY

God, I know. But don't tell your dad. I think it's set in stone.

DAVID

Has Erin declared a major yet?

SALLY

No. When I try to talk about it with her, come up with ideas, she just says "art". No medium, no style, just "art". Like I said, no joy from that one. None. *Passionate*, though. Lots of passion to go to college, just no idea what she'll do when she gets there, but hey that's a start, I'll take what I can get. I think she's just happy to get out of here and not be around people like that awful Erica Albright.

DAVID

(muttering) She's welcome for even be able to go to college.

SALLY

Hm?

She hands David the phone.

DAVID

Nothing...it's just...the new place is small.

SALLY

Not for San Francisco.

DAVID

It is in comparison.

SALLY

Well...we got very lucky with the house we have.

DAVID

(pause) Had.

Sally leans over the table and speaks with a distinct "concerned mom" tone.

SALLY

Is everything ok down there with you? In the city?

DAVID

...Yeah?

SALLY

I only ask because you've been coming up to visit a lot since you moved out.

DAVID

I need a break sometimes. To decompress. City's a big place, job is hard, it gets overwhelming. Do you not want me to visit?

SALLY

No! Of course not! You're always welcome with us.

DAVID

Hmph.

SALLY

(teasing) What about Claire? How's she doing?

DAVID
That fell apart.

SALLY
What?

DAVID
We broke up.

SALLY
Oh. Oh, no, hon, I'm sorry! She seemed so nice!

DAVID
She was.

SALLY
That sucks.

DAVID
(subtly angry) Yeah.

SALLY
That really sucks.

DAVID
(nods) Mmhmm.

SALLY
(beat, nods) So uh, why did-- do you have an idea of why it ended with-with Claire? Because, I will say, you have a tendency to--

*David drops his fork
and slumps back in
his seat.*

DAVID
Can you not?

SALLY
What?! What am I doing?

DAVID
(mimes prodding) Prodding. You're prodding again, that's what you always do.

SALLY

I'm not prodding, I'm--I'm *wondering*! I'm asking!

DAVID

Look, it just fell apart. I...I had my fuckups, we argued over stupid shit, and I tried, a few times actually, to-to fix things. For some reason, (*shrug*) it always ended with us breaking up, no matter what was changed.

SALLY

Well...then maybe it's just not meant to be.

DAVID

Nothing is inevitable if you don't want it to be.

SALLY

Wow. That's certainly...benevolent of you.

DAVID

You disagree?

SALLY

(*shrug*) Some things you can't control. Whatever it is...change, loss, you just gotta let it flow through you like a river.

DAVID

Rivers can be dammed. Water can be stopped.

SALLY

(*scoff*) God I taught you *nothing* about nature. Dams can *absolutely* be broken. Water'll always flow, one way or another.

DAVID

(*beat*) Not without a fight, though.

SALLY

If you find yourself kicking and screaming in a river, you're probably *drowning*.

DAVID

Alright, enough with the river metaphor. (*beat*) I just...have a shitty habit of fucking things up with my friends and...I say and do stupid shit without realizing it, not to mention I have a father

DAVID (cont'd)

whose ego is taking everyone around him across the country and burning every trace that we ever had a life here! So why is it a problem that I don't like how things are going? Why is it so impossible for me to have what *I* want?

Sally clasps her hands.

SALLY

I know, I know you wanted to keep the house. I'm *sorry* we couldn't. And I know, I've told you that a thousand times, in a thousand arguments about it. I don't want to lose the place either. *(pause)* I'm not supposed to be telling you this, and please don't tell your dad I did. But we *can't* keep it. If we do, even as a summer house or whatever, even if we rent it out, we can't afford our new place. Then there's the office, and all the new business expenses, so. Things are tight. This was our *only choice*.

DAVID

(beat) Shit...

SALLY

Oh! And Erin's college. Of course! Can't forget that.

DAVID

How bad is it?

SALLY

It's *fine!* We'll be fine. We just...we *couldn't* hold onto it. *(pause)* It'll work out. We'll be fine. We just need to get on our feet in Cali. *(beat)* Say *nothing* of this to your father. He didn't want you knowing, it's already got him plenty stressed. *(beat)* We had a great run at that house though, *(pause)* and I'll miss every single part of it. *Even* that creepy statue in the back.

DAVID

You really do hate Tar--the statue.

SALLY

I *really* do! I don't know how you and Henry talked me into keeping it. Or why you even liked the damn thing.

DAVID

I don't know. It's just... it's weird that I have to say goodbye.

SALLY

Yeah...change has never come easy for you.

DAVID

To be fair, who *likes* change? *(beat)* I don't know. It's...just *weird*.

*Sally nods her head,
realizing what her
son actually meant.*

SALLY

(beat) It's not easy for us either. Especially since...well the timing is inconvenient.

DAVID

It'll be six years ago this week since...y'know.

SALLY

(nod, pause) Your dad even gave me a veto. But, I decided we should go.

DAVID

Why?

SALLY

Dad sees it as fulfilling Henry's dream for himself. Going to Silicon Valley, create important technologies. And I have a new challenge for myself; I get to meet the Sequoias of California. *(beat)* It wasn't like we were going to dig him up and bring him with us.

DAVID

Well, you could always strap his coffin to the roof of the car. I'm sure you'd catch some interesting looks on the drive out west.

*Sally shakes her
head.*

SALLY

You know, it's ok to not have the power to control everything. Keep everything the way it was. That's life.

DAVID

Well for certain things, right? Can't keep the house, but you can schedule and regulate every step Erin takes?

SALLY

Yep, because that's what moms do. *(beat)* Oh! So, I have something for you.

Sally reaches into her purse and pulls out a retro Green Lantern (Hal Jordan) action figure.

DAVID

(muttering) Just gonna glaze over the total hypocrisy, ok.

SALLY

Do you remember this?

She hands David the figure.

DAVID

Is this Henry's?

SALLY

Yeah. I found it under his dresser while I was cleaning. Wanted to give it to you before your dad claims it for himself, so keep that between us. *(shady whisper)* It's partly why we're here, so your dad doesn't intercept this *important transfer*. *(pause)* Do you remember why Green Lantern was his favorite?

DAVID

He always wanted to go to space and his favorite color was green.

SALLY

(chuckles) He told me that the Green Lantern only needed a thought to create anything out of nothing. He could use his ring to make

SALLY *(cont'd)*

whatever he wanted to appear before his eyes, as real as could be.
(beat) Nothing was impossible for him.

DAVID

He could have whatever he wanted. (beat) Henry was the dreamer.

SALLY

He preferred the term *creator*.

*The two smile
warmly. A beat.
David looks down at
his plate, then back
up at his mom.*

SALLY (cont'd)

(pause, rubs eyes) God, six years...he only went out to get a damn pizza. Something so normal, interrupted so...so quickly. I still think your father wanted to kill that damn drunk himself.

DAVID

(beat) You know I am happy for dad. The new business, it's really cool. Sorry if I didn't show it before.

SALLY

You deserved to know why we're not keeping the place. I'm sorry we didn't tell you, but you can see why your dad wouldn't want you to know, right?

DAVID

Pride before the fall and all that?

SALLY

Oh stop. This is a new chapter for us. We're looking right into the unknown. It's scary, even for your dad. He doesn't want you to be scared either.

DAVID

Is Llama gonna work out?

SALLY

I hope so. But even if it doesn't, we'll be alright. We all will.

*Sally smiles with
false confidence.*

DAVID

You know, I can't tell, in his eyes, if he sees me as David the disappointment, or just *not* Henry. Like, no matter what, I'm always the middle child. I guess that's better than being the family fuck-up, but...y'know.

SALLY

(pause) Well. You could always just talk to him. *(pause)* Like I've said a thousand times. Maybe something good will come out of it. You don't know.

DAVID

(scoffs) Is all that gonna happen before you move across the country or after? Because I'm not doing skype family therapy.

SALLY

No. *(hopeful)* But, right now, I think you can start.

DAVID

Hmph.

SALLY

(sigh) Ok. Let's hit the road. Can you take care of the tip, please?

*The two stand up.
Sally starts to walk
away.*

*David pulls out his
wallet and leaves a
a few bills as a
tip.*

DAVID

(sigh) Guess this is it, then...let's do it.

David exits.

*The spotlight fades.
The diner booth
moves off stage.*

Lights up on the house.

An interlude of flat clarinet and flute notes are HEARD as MARTIN and ERIN walk onstage, each holding two boxes full of computer equipment.

Erin's knees buckle under the weight of the box.

MARTIN
Ok, that one goes over there--

Martin uses his foot to point in the direction of the door.

MARTIN (cont'd)
--and that one...um.

ERIN
(*straining*) Dad.

MARTIN
(*giggling*) Hold on! I'm thinking.

ERIN
(*straining*) Think faster.

MARTIN
I'm just trying to decide...where the best place for that box is.

ERIN
(*angry, strained*) I'm about to drop the box right here, that's gonna be the best place for it in two seconds.

MARTIN

Oh, relax. Put it over there.

Martin points to the wall upstage left with his foot.

Erin rushes over and slams the box to the ground.

ERIN

Ugh! (*panting*) You know you're not funny, right? You are not a funny person.

MARTIN

I'm fine with that. Didn't have to be funny. It was just supposed to screw with you.

ERIN

(*sigh*) Well, mission accomplished, good job.

Erin takes out her phone and sits on the couch.

Martin glances at his watch.

MARTIN

I think mom's gonna get back with your brother soon.

ERIN

(*sighs*) Great.

MARTIN

She texted me earlier, she says he's doing well. He's got a uh...cool gig at his job.

ERIN

Oh please. I saw what he does when I stayed with him during a college visit. He works in a room with a dozen other guys who never

ERIN (cont'd)

shower, typing away endlessly. He might as well be a monkey at a typewriter.

MARTIN

As a former typewriting monkey, I take offense. I shower.

ERIN

If you shower with a three in one body shampoo, you might as well not be. And *c'mon*. David's stuck with a crap job. It's not a "cool gig". Don't comfort him.

MARTIN

Well, you're always gonna have a crap job when you just get out of school! No matter what line of work you're in.

ERIN

He graduated two years ago.

MARTIN

Your view of success is very liminal. That's how the tech industry works. You have to put your time in and do the crap work first before you can do the cool stuff. Not everyone is a Zuckerberg...*(mumbling)* thank god.

ERIN

(scoffs) Well...I wouldn't say *have to*, I mean, *Henry*!!

MARTIN

//Your brother's skills were incredible. Double major computer science and mechanical engineering. Graduated summa cum laude. His talents got him his job. He *blew* past the competition. Talent translates, Erin. Remember that. Talent. Translates. Your abilities will *always* bring you to the place you belong.

ERIN

So then you think David deserves crap work?

Martin opens his mouth to retort, but sighs and shakes his head. He walks over to the boxes and

*starts rearranging
them to be neater.*

MARTIN

What I'm saying is that your brother is exactly where he *belongs*. And that's good for *him*.

*Erin scrolls through
her phone,
engrossed, ignoring
everything else.*

*Martin shakes his
head and scratches
his beard.*

MARTIN

So how you feel about college? Move-in day's not far off.

ERIN

Eh. S'fine.

*Martin sits on the
couch next to his
daughter.*

MARTIN

You know, mom's still not too cool with you wanting to move into your dorm by yourself.

ERIN

Mmmph.

MARTIN

(beat) It's an important moment for a parent too, you know. Helping your kid move into college...I mean, sure, fair enough, we did already have two chances to experience that, with Henry and David, but if we get a third chance, why pass it up?

*Erin turns to her
dad, purses her
lips, cocks her
eyebrows, and shrugs*

*her shoulders like
she's saying "oh
well!"*

MARTIN

(chuckles) Don't be rude.

ERIN

That's not me being rude. You'll know when I'm being rude.

MARTIN

Ooo, we got a badass here. *(chuckles, pause)* You might wanna just give this to your mom. I don't mind, you know, I get it, but she deserves to see you off. It means a lot to her. *(pause)*

MARTIN

I remember every little detail from when we dropped off Henry. When we got to the campus, he piled all his stuff into this crappy moving cart with a busted wheel. He wanted to move it all in one trip, he was so excited. So, he starts pushing it up this hill towards his dorm. He turns around to tell us to hurry up, and then, the busted wheel decides to take a hard right turn. The cart starts rolling down the hill, headed for a brick wall. Your brother chases after it, and grabs it at the last second. Right before it smashed into the wall. Then he pushed the cart back all the way up the hill. Then, heh, then we get into the dorm, and oh my god. Henry's roommate was this douchey photographer guy from Long Island, covering every single surface with his prints. And they were *all*, just *terrible*. The *most* unoriginal, crappy, derivative, lazy photographs I've ever seen. *(beat)* But, you knew your brother. He didn't even care. He was just happy to be there. He walked right in, and the first thing he pulled out was that Green Lantern figure he had. He stood it up on his desk, then looked back at me, and said "let's get started".

*Erin's face softens
with a longing
sadness as she sees
her fathers do the
same.*

MARTIN (cont'd)

"Let's get started"...but that was Henry's move-in day. David's on the other hand...uh...

Martin's face goes blank.

MARTIN (cont'd)

Huh. I'm--I'm kinda blanking on David's. I know I was there, I just uh, can't remember a thing. *(pause, sigh)* God. I just...I can't believe it's gonna be six freakin' years. Six years since Henry...

The SOUND of a car driving towards the house over gravel is heard.

MARTIN (cont'd)

Think that's Mom pulling into the drive.

Martin stands.

Erin stays on the couch, the same concerned softness on her face.

MARTIN (cont'd)

You alright?

Erin snaps back and stands.

ERIN

Yeah.

MARTIN

Good...Be nice.

*All exit.
A chorus of synthesized chimes RINGS.*

The lights focus on the center of the

stage, everything else falling into shadow.

SIX YEARS AGO FROM NOW.

Sally, Martin, and a younger David (17) enter, dressed in black suit jackets over their original costumes.

Sally takes a seat on the end of the couch and rubs her temple.

She snuffles and wipes her teary eyes.

David sits on the other end of the couch, and leans over his knees.

Martin puts his hand on his wife's shoulder.

MARTIN

You want some water?

SALLY

(quietly, nods) Yeah.

Martin kisses the top of her head.

He walks towards the kitchen stage right,

*touching David's
shoulder on his way.*

*David recoils at his
touch, almost by
instinct.*

*Martin notices this
but says nothing,
exiting into the
kitchen.*

*David leans back on
the couch, staring
up at the ceiling.*

SALLY

(looks at David) Do you want dad to bring you some water too?

*David shakes his
head.*

SALLY (cont'd)

Your sister's still outside...

*Martin enters with a
glass of water.*

MARTIN

She'll be ok. She's a trooper, she'll come in when she's ready. *(to David)* You alright, bud?

DAVID

(quietly) Mmm.

MARTIN

What?

DAVID

(snaps back) I'm fine.

Martin looks at Sally. She shakes her head.

Martin exits into the kitchen.

SALLY
Honey...*(beat)* David look at me.

David swings his head over.

SALLY *(cont'd)*
Put the claws away. Please. We're all sad and angry, but you don't get to lash out at us. Don't start something with dad. Especially today, of all days.

DAVID
(testy) I'm *fine*, mom. I'm doing *nothing*. I'm just sitting here.

SALLY
It's not...you know, it's like you're stuck in the mud, but instead of trying to lift your foot out of the mud, you're just standing there complaining about being stuck in the first place. I know it's hard, and it just doesn't happen like that, but you have to be willing to try and...and...you can't--

DAVID
--I'm not a baby, mom. I understand it. It's *death*. I have a right to react to it however I want. If dad's got a problem with it that's *his* problem.

SALLY
We just buried our son. I-pray-that you never have to feel this way. Like you've just been shot and all you can do is stare at the hole, and I-I can't. I just-...we're all going through the same thing right now, and--

DAVID
--No we're not. *(beat)* We're not going through the same thing. You have no idea what I feel right now.

Sally adjusts on the couch, turning towards David.

A stoic bald man, draped in purple and green robes, steps into the doorway. David turns and sees TARU. Sally doesn't notice him. David turns back to his mom.

Martin enters.

MARTIN
Oh-kay.

Martin stops at the chair.

MARTIN (cont'd)
Takeout for dinner? Maybe pizza?

SALLY
(softly) Sure.

David stands and walks over to Taru.

MARTIN
David? Pizza?

DAVID
I don't care.

MARTIN
Well if you don't care I'm not gonna order you anything.

DAVID
(snapping back, loud) Just get me whatever! I don't fucking care!

MARTIN

(stern) Cool it. Now.

DAVID

Leave me the fuck alone.

MARTIN

(yells, stern) Alright enough! Just...shut up. You can't even behave on the day we bury your damn brother. Stop trying to drag us all down into whatever pit you're stuck in. *(beat)* Just for that, I'm getting you an anchovy slice.

DAVID

(scoff) "Drag you down", yeah that's me, thanks. You've made it very clear that I'm the one holding everyone back. I'm the disappointment.

MARTIN

Yeah! Sometimes you are!

*Tears form in
David's eyes.*

*He storms out. Taru
calmly follows him.*

*Martin sits on the
couch and leans over
his knees.*

Sally rubs his back.

*Lights fade as
gentle xylophone
notes are heard, and
all exit.*

*The set shifts to
the backyard, the
back porch of the
house covering stage
left and the
expansive woods, the
right.*

*The back of the
house is painted*

blue with white trim, with a small staircase leading to the ground. From there, the yard sprawls out into the woods in the background.

The lighting is bright and warm, like a summer day without a cloud in the sky.

On the far side of the yard, about 40 feet from the house, is *THE STATUE*.

A slab of tough rock, cut into the shape of a large pill, with intricate geometric curves carved into the shape of features. At the top of the statue, a rounded blank face stares out.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO.

A young *HENRY*, 11, enters from inside. His kind, confident face sees the statue and his jaw drops. Henry looks around with a curious wonder.

HENRY

Woah...*(turns to the house, yells)* HEY DAVID! GET OUT HERE!

*A young DAVID, 8,
enters from inside.*

*He wears overalls
over his original
costume and is
missing a front
tooth.*

DAVID

What?...Woah...

HENRY

I know, right?

DAVID

What is it?

HENRY

It's a rock.

DAVID

Well DUH it's a rock, stupid. But it's got stuff on it.

HENRY

It's carvings.

DAVID

It looks like it's got a face.

HENRY

Woah.

DAVID

Yeah.

HENRY

I'm gonna touch it.

DAVID

No!

HENRY

David it's a rock, it's fine.

DAVID

But what if it's not?

HENRY

If it's not, you get to pick the movie we watch tonight.

DAVID

Deal.

HENRY

Ok.

Henry extends his hand and approaches the statue.

DAVID

Boo!

*Henry jumps.
He slugs David in the arm.*

DAVID

Owww!

HENRY

It wasn't that hard, *baby*.

DAVID

(stops feigning pain) Idiot.

Henry approaches the statue again.

Slowly, he presses his hand against the stone. He looks back at David.

HENRY
See, it's fine!

*David approaches and
gently places his
hand on the rock.*

DAVID
Huh. Just a rock.

HENRY
Yup. A rock.

*A blue light gleams
from the carvings of
the statue as a HUM
is heard.*

*David and Henry try
to pull their hands
away, but are
somehow stuck.*

DAVID
I can't let go! Henry, help!

HENRY
I'm stuck too! I can't--

*Lights go off. All
that's left is a
spotlight on the
boys as they fall
backwards into the
void.*

DAVID
I didn't do it. You did.

HENRY
How did I do it?!

DAVID
You touched it first! You did something!

HENRY

Well you made me do it!

A shadowy bald figure steps onto stage left as the brothers bicker, his face hidden by darkness.

TARU

Aw, damn it.

The brothers go silent, surprised to hear someone.

HENRY

Who said that?

DAVID

What--who's that?!

HENRY

(turns to see the shadowy figure) Are-are you God?

DAVID

Are we in hell?

TARU

Nope. Too bad though, Hell is actually kind of awesome.

Taru waves his hand.

The lights come up on the backyard and Taru.

HENRY and DAVID

(jaw on the floor) Woahhhh!

TARU (cont'd)

Oh good. More stupid stupid stupid kids.

DAVID
At least we're not bald.

Taru gasps.

*David points and
LAUGHS.*

*Taru reaches out and
David freezes.*

*Taru waves his hand.
TEN SECONDS AGO.*

*David winds back in
time from laughing,
to speaking, to
standing in wonder,
still frozen.*

HENRY
What just happened?

TARU
I started this over. I'm not having this conversation start with a *bald joke*, if I wanted to be insulted I'd talk to my father. Except I can't do that so this is what I have to work with.

*Taru waves his hand
and unfreezes David.*

DAVID
Woah...

HENRY
(beat) Can you control time?!

TARU
Yep. Name's Taru. I'm the spirit of time.

HENRY
My name is Henry. This is my brother David.

DAVID
Hi.

TARU
I'm guessing he's the problem child?

DAVID
What?

HENRY
Yeah, a little bit. (*looks at David*) Just a little bit!

TARU
sigh Ok, here's the deal. (*droning*) Congratulations, you have unlocked the power of Taru, "cursed to be bound in this rock and serve all those who find him, giving whoever he may serve the power

TARU (*cont'd*)
to command time", yadda yadda yadda, that's the spiel I gotta give you.

DAVID
Woahhh. So you like, serve us now?

TARU
Yes.

HENRY
Like a genie?

TARU
Yes, but only with time related stuff and as many wishes as you want.

DAVID
Woahhhh. Prove it. Do cool time stuff.

TARU
sigh Fine. How?

HENRY
You're the time guy, why can't you do it?

TARU

I can only do what you command me to.

DAVID

Do you at least have any ideas?

TARU

(sigh) Ughhhhh, I don't know, man. I'm just a servant, you're supposed to be the idea guy.

HENRY

How many people did you serve before us?

TARU

Pffft. I don't know. Couple hundred. Probably coming close to a thousand.

HENRY

So what did they want you to do?

TARU

See cool and important stuff. Learn who built the pyramids, watch the moon mission launch. That kind of stuff.

DAVID

Who did build the pyramids? Was it aliens?!

TARU

What? No. It was a bunch of Egyptians and their slaves. What--what are you learning in history class? You do go to school, right?

HENRY

They don't really know who built them. Nobody was there to see it.

TARU

Except of course, yah boy here.

DAVID

Oh! I know! Make something go super slow!

Taru waves his hand.

*David begins to move
super slowly.*

DAVID
(*slo mo*) Woah!

*David throws a slo
mo punch at Henry.*

*Taru waves his hand
again and returns
David to normal
speed.*

*David goes back to
normal speed and
slugs Henry.*

HENRY
Ow!

DAVID
Ha! Now make me older!

TARU
Ugh. You sure?

DAVID
Yeah!

TARU
It's not gonna be flattering, just gonna warn you ahead of time.

Taru waves his hand.

*David's posture
straightens. His
missing tooth grows
in. He brushes his
hair back, and the
overalls fall off.*

*Regular old 23 y/o
David is back.*

DAVID
Woah! I'm old!

TARU
You're 23 now. Congrats. You can now buy alcohol and get a tattoo that you'll definitely regret.

HENRY
Ha! Wow.

DAVID
What do I do in the future? Is it something awesome?

TARU
You sure you wanna know?

DAVID
Why would I not?

TARU
Spoilers can change things. If you know, you might try to make something different happen, and that could change the future in a bad way. I'll tell you if that's what you command, but I advise against it.

HENRY
I'll try something easy. Tell us when humans will go to Mars.

TARU
2254. Mars City is established. First Burger King opened the next day.

DAVID and HENRY
Woahhh!

DAVID
Ok I'm done being old now.

*Taru waves his hand
and David turns back*

*into his 8 y/o
version.*

DAVID (cont'd)
That was *cool*.

TARU
Sure. So, guys, just gonna say this now so you understand, but I need you both to understand that time travel is very consequential, and while I *have* to do whatever you tell me to do, please don't change history *too* much, ok? No killing baby Hitler, stuff like that.

DAVID
Hitler killed our great grandma.

TARU
You and I are just getting off to a bad start, kid. I'm sorry, that one's on me. *(pause)* So promise? No breaking history.

DAVID and HENRY
We promise.

TARU
Oh and don't worry about anyone finding out about me. The curse makes it so if you try to tell anyone about me, time rewinds automatically so you never said that in the first place.

HENRY
Cooooool!

DAVID
We're cursed! Nice!

TARU
Yeah, super cool. So yeah, I'm Taru, I'm your servant, so what do you want to do now?

HENRY
So why do you call yourself a servant?

TARU
Because that's what I am, that's what I've always been.

DAVID
Why?

TARU
Because a long time ago, I did something bad, and the other spirits decided that I needed to be punished. So they put me in this stupid rock, and cursed me to be bound to whoever touches it until they die. It's stupid, something about "learning responsibility", it's a whole thing, goes back to the Stone Age, and this thing with my father, I don't want to talk about it, so don't ask. But that's just what I've always been; a servant.

HENRY
That's not very nice. But you have to do whatever we say, right?

TARU
Yeah.

HENRY
So then I say you don't call yourself that anymore. You can just be our friend Taru.

DAVID
Yeah!

TARU
(*pause, smile*) Wow. Thanks, guys.

HENRY
Cool.

TARU
So you guys wanna go anywhere? Do anything?

DAVID
I wanna meet a dragon!

TARU
Those aren't real.

DAVID
Aw! What?!

TARU
Oops.

Henry exits into the house.

David puts on the black suit jacket from before.

Taru rubs his hands together anxiously.

SIX YEARS AGO FROM NOW. AFTER THE FUNERAL.

DAVID
(*sad, impatient*) What do you want, Taru?

TARU
Well, I figured you'd want a hug after today...

Taru extends his arms.

David walks right past him, wiping tears from his face.

DAVID
I don't want a damn hug.

Taru tucks his arms under his armpits and nods.

TARU
(*nonchalantly*) Ok. That's fine, the wound is still raw, obviously. You just buried him, and all.

DAVID
Good read.

TARU
Thank you. Is there anything I can do?

DAVID
There's nothing you're actually willing to do that'll help me.

TARU
Oh...well, it-it's just...

*David steps towards
Taru. The spirit
steps away.*

DAVID
Taru, take me back to//the day he died.

TARU
//No. No, David, no. Lalalala I can't hear you! Lalala!

DAVID
Taru, come on!

TARU
(plugs ears) What? Huh? Lalalala I can't hear you! I'm sorry!

*David grabs Taru's
hands and pulls them
out of his ears.*

DAVID
Taru, you're bound to serve me. And you can't keep doing that to ignore me.

TARU
Lalalala yes I can lalalala.

DAVID
Alright, stop. Please.

TARU
(stops) Fine. Look, David, dude...

David sits on the porch step.

DAVID

I know what you're gonna say, and I know why you're gonna say it. But I can't sit here and pretend that I can't do anything to bring Henry back. If I don't save him, I might as well have helped kill him.

Taru walks over to David and places his hand on David's shoulder.

TARU

No you won't. You have no part in his death. Don't say that shit again...Without spoiling it, just trust me; it's good that Henry died.

DAVID

What?

TARU

I said--

David hits Taru on the chest.

Taru drops to the ground, gripping his breast.

TARU

(agast) You petty child! What the hell is wrong with you?! "Oh, Taru won't help me break the freaking future, guess I'll just punch him in the chest!"

DAVID

You didn't need to say that, dick.

TARU

And you didn't need to punch me, moron!

DAVID

Your body's a projection, it's barely even real. So calm down.

TARU

(shrieking) It's real to me!

DAVID

(sigh) I'm sorry, Taru, hey.

*David puts his hands
on Taru's shoulders.*

*The two sit in the
grass.*

DAVID (cont'd)

I'm sorry. I've just...that wasn't cool.

TARU

(beat) I'm sorry...bad phrasing on my part. *(pause)* I-just-ok. When it's our time to go, that's the end of it. It's not your call, it's not my call, and it certainly wasn't Henry's call.

DAVID

He was T-boned by a drunk driver. That's no way to go.

TARU

...No it isn't. But people die in horrible ways every day. Are you going to save them all?

DAVID

I'm gonna do what I can. I can save my brother. So I'm gonna do that.

TARU

Even if you shouldn't?

DAVID

Why shouldn't I? What *possible* reason could you have to not want to stop Henry from dying?

TARU

The...future. I shouldn't say more.

DAVID

(scoffs) Wow. That's your go-to answer, isn't it?

TARU

That doesn't mean it's not true, it just means I have to repeat myself.

DAVID

Ok. Sure. So, what happens? Is it a bad future?

TARU

Yes.

DAVID

Well fine. Whatever *saving my brother* inadvertently causes, I'll take care of it. Because no matter what it is, I can fix it.

TARU

Not this time.

DAVID

What? Why not?

TARU

It's set in stone here, buddy.

DAVID

How? How's that possible?!

TARU

Just is. Saw it myself. Looked into a bunch of possible futures. All of them lead to the same place.

DAVID

Where's that?

TARU

(beat, swallow) A very bad place. Like we're talking...worst case scenario.

DAVID

(beat) I can make a perfect future. Whatever it is, I'll handle it.

TARU

What does "all" mean to you? I just said this but I'll say it again; all possible futures all lead to a *bad place*. Should I say it slower? Use smaller words maybe?

DAVID

But with you I can fix it! There's always a way!

TARU

Not this time.

DAVID

No...no I can do it! I can make my own future!

TARU

Oh my *god!* You didn't hear a word I said! Look, I'm sorry. I hate that Henry is dead too. But you cannot do *anything* about it. So don't ask me to help you do something stupid!

DAVID

Taru, I command you to--

TARU

Lalalala I can't hear you! Lalala!

DAVID

Fine! Screw you! Some time god you are.

David walks into the house and slams the door.

TARU

I-I'm really more of a spirit! *(sigh)* Kid's got a rough future ahead of him...

Taru disappears in a puff of smoke.

NOW.

23 y/o David walks out into the backyard.

DAVID

Taru! Where you at?

*Taru walks out from
behind the statue.*

TARU

(jaded) Oh good, you're back. Again.

*Taru walks past
David and sits on
the porch.*

TARU (cont'd)

What do you want?

DAVID

I just came to say hi. Am I not allowed to?

TARU

You are. But you never do unless you want something.

DAVID

Well this time I did.

*Taru stands and
walks up to David,
squinting. David
tries to maintain
himself, but breaks.*

DAVID

Fuck.

TARU

Ah! Ahaha! I knew it! So what is it now, you wanna take back something stupid you said to your girlfriend again? Ooo! Maybe redo another job interview? Or you want to sample every flavor of ice cream at the shop for the tenth time? It's getting pathetic at this point, y'know. If I had a choice, I would never have helped you with that crap. It was cutesy and fun when you were young, but now you're gross and old and it's just sad.

DAVID

I'm 23, that's not really 'old'. *You*, you're old.

TARU

Yes but *I'm* an immortal spirit. You're old for a human. Not even an impressive one. Just some sad mortal with a *crappy* life.

DAVID

Well, I'm *trying* to make it *less* crappy. That's why I go back and fix shit. Why do you have a problem with that? I'm just some withering meatsack to you, right? My requests mean *nothing* to the mighty Taru in the end.

TARU

Yeah well, I've got to deal with you *now*. That's annoying to *me*.

DAVID

Thanks. Real nice. Good to see you.

TARU

(pause) So when's everyone moving out?

DAVID

This week. In a couple of days.

TARU

Wow...I know you're not happy about them selling the place. So if you're here to try and change that, get me to take you back to sabotage your dad's new business, I'm not gonna let you do it. You're a sick puppy if that's what you want.

DAVID

No. No, wow. You really think so little of me.

TARU

I do, yes. Although if you wanted to go back and tell him that Llama is a terrible name, I wouldn't object because...

DAVID

It's a terrible name for a tech company.

TARU

It *is*. It's awful!

DAVID

(*smile, beat*) That's not why I came up. I-I just here to help pack and...I don't know. Say goodbye I guess.

TARU

Awww. To me?

DAVID

Yeah, I mean, I know you're kinda mad at me, but we're still friends, right?

TARU

I suppose.

DAVID

So...what are you gonna do when we leave?

TARU

(*sits down*) Probably what I've done every time my friends leave. Wait for new ones to come around. Oh! Wait. Never mind. I'm still stuck to your boring soul. So I *can't* bond to anyone else. Not till you die. Any chance you could make that happen sooner?

DAVID

No.

TARU

Eh, it was worth asking.

DAVID

Sorry...

TARU

(*snickers*) For what? Being alive?

DAVID

I mean, I guess. If I can't be close to the statue, I can't use it. So I'm just letting you sit there until I die. Sounds boring.

TARU

Eh. It's alright. Not the first time my master's moved away.

DAVID

I'd take you with me if I could.

TARU

You'd lug a giant statue around with you for the rest of your life? Where would you even put me?

DAVID

I...I have a closet in my apartment.

TARU

(giggles) I'll just crash right through your floor. Imagine, I fall right into some old lady's living room like, "Hi there!" *sigh* Yeah. I've been doing this for a while though...I watched the trees around us grow from saplings and the house behind you be built. But y'know, for me, there'll be something else. *Someone* else. Always has been.

DAVID

Good to know I mean so little to you.

TARU

I didn't say *that*. *(pause)* I do, *sometimes*... care about the people I come across. Only makes it more painful, though.

DAVID

Their inevitable deaths?

TARU

Doesn't even have to be death. It hurts to lose people no matter how they leave you. But in a weird way, that's ok. You can't hold onto everything forever.

DAVID

But you can do whatever you need to make your best possible life. With all the people you want to be with.

TARU

It's not that simple. Never ends up being clean when you change something so huge.

DAVID

I know, I know. You're cursed or being punished or whatever. By whom though? I know you said "the spirits" but...which one?

TARU

(sigh) My father.

DAVID

Oh...

TARU

Yeah.

DAVID

You never wanted to tell Henry or me *why* you were cursed. Maybe, considering the circumstances, you'd wanna...

TARU

I...I tried to save the dinosaurs.

DAVID

What?

TARU

I was there. All the spirits were. Urik, Nor, Yume that kitschy prick, and my dad, Tyro, the Spirit of Existence. He helped everything that ever was and will be. Including the beasts of the TARU (cont'd)

Cretaceous. When we saw the meteor coming, everyone else just accepted it. There had been mass extinctions before, and there would be more after. But I couldn't. I wound back the clock, and made the meteor move slower. Instead of hitting the earth and killing the dinosaurs, it'll be back in around...oh shit. Probably next year.

David looks at Taru concerned.

TARU

It's fine, I'll take care of it. *(beat)* But, dad was furious that I interfered like that. Said it wasn't my place. I asked him if I've got the power to do it, why shouldn't I? 'It was destined to be', he said. So, he created a *new* meteor, it struck the earth, and killed the dinosaurs. I wanted to rewind time again, but he stopped me. Said I had no control, that I was going against "*the natural order of things*". So he locked me in the statue. Cursed me to be bound to every soul who finds me, and that for the next trillion years, I'd be

bound to obey every command given to me. Hell of a punishment, even for an immortal.

DAVID

That sounds like torture.

TARU

Yeah. It's manageable. I can't talk to anyone other than the souls I'm bound to, so nobody can see me and behold my glorious robes, but I'll take the company I get.

DAVID

(beat) So then...why won't you help me bring Henry back?

TARU

(beat) Because it wouldn't end well--.

DAVID

No, no, enough of that. I know that, you've said it enough already. You clearly want to use your power to help people. Why not Henry?

TARU

Alternate futures are nothing to screw with, David. I saw one where I succeeded and saved the dinos. They evolved to the point where they could talk and had *thumbs*. Then humans came along and the dinosaurs wiped them out because hey they tasted good.

DAVID

Wow.

TARU

Everything that's supposed to happen will. No matter what. I've had that lesson drilled into my head over the years, believe me.

DAVID

We both know that's not true.

TARU

I'm referring to a *cosmic* scale. That includes death. Death is the biggest and smallest thing that ever happens. On one hand, someone is gone forever, lost to the void of eternal darkness. But on the other hand, they didn't mean anything in the grand scheme of the universe, so it doesn't matter that they're gone.

DAVID

But doesn't what you want matter? What you think is right?

TARU

Yeah. But I can't have everything I want. *(beat)* Why now? Why bring this up again?

DAVID

Well, this is it, right? With us? I'll never get to see you again unless *I* buy this place, and that's never gonna be possible. So...if I don't try to save my brother...in the only way I can...I--

TARU

No. No no no.

DAVID

I need to *try!*

TARU

No you don't! You can just suck it up and realize you can't do *anything* about it! It's what plenty of people do every day!

DAVID

Please. Just obey the command, and let me do this. This-this is it for us. I'll never get to time travel again after the move. I have one last chance to *save my brother*, and all that's standing in the way is you refusing to hear me.

TARU

And y'know. Dark future.

DAVID

I will do *anything* to make *everything* right!

TARU

We're going in circles here. You said the same things years ago. Nothing's changed. Look, I know we've been over this, and I'm sick of repeating myself, so I'll say this; it isn't fair that you can't bring Henry back. And I know the pain of possibility, the fact that you *can* stop him from dying being right in front of you, that's horrible. And I'm sorry you can't do more.

DAVID

You're just telling me what I want to hear. That you feel bad but can't let me do it, so it's not on me for not trying. What did you want to say? What does Taru the great and powerful really think?

TARU

(beat) I think you're selfish. I think you've been cheating life itself to an extent where it's not even like you're living anymore, you're following instructions. Human life isn't a LEGO set, you can't just snap it together however you want.

DAVID

Oh *please*. Cheating "life itself" is your whole shtick. It's as much on you that I feel like I have to fix everything.

TARU

Well I'm sorry for ever being bound to you. Not like I had a choice. You put your grubby hand on that damn statue, you stuck yourself with me.

DAVID

scoff And lucky me, I get stuck with a time god--

TARU

-Spirit.

DAVID

Time *spirit*, sorry. Don't want to fluff your ego any more than you do yourself.

TARU

It's called *confidence*, it helps your skin, you should try it sometime. I'm *baby* soft.

Taru smugly rubs his cheeks.

DAVID

I came up home to *try* and do what you and everyone else have been telling me to do; I'm trying to move on. I'm not going to sabotage

the move, so this *is* happening; everyone's moving out. But I-I don't know, I still have a *chance* to do what I've always wanted to, something *objectively* good, and you won't even consider helping me. So I *can't* move on, because I have to live with the fact that I always could but never did. *(beat)* Is this alternate future so *horrible*? What could be worth not saving my brother?

TARU

I *can't* tell you! Because then the-the future will change again and I *can't* do that!

DAVID

(angry) What happens, Taru?

TARU

(stands) I shouldn't tell you! And you need to get it through your thick skull that this holier than thou bullshit isn't gonna work on me! I get it. You miss your brother. Boo hoo. *Lots* of people miss their dead relatives. So *shut up*, and stop acting like Henry is some special fucking case! He's not! He's a corpse in the ground just like everyone is gonna be one day!

David shoves Taru to the ground.

TARU

(pained) Ah! Bitch!

DAVID

Screw you. Screw you, Taru.

David exits into the house.

SIX YEARS AGO FROM NOW.

THE DAY HENRY DIED.

The Living Room.

17 y/o David is sitting on the floor.

On the coffee table is DAVID'S SCIENCE PROJECT; three fans with LED lights built into the blades, attached to a wooden board with a mess of wires extending from the fans to a small control box, connected to a laptop.

David sits on the floor, fiddling with the wires. He types a command into his laptop.

He flips a switch on the board, and fans start to spin.

He flips a 2nd switch. The red LED lights switch on.

David presses a few keys on the laptop, then looks at the fans with an anxious look.

Slowly, several of the lights come back on, forming on each of the fans a shape. On the first fan, the letter H. The second, I. and the third, !.

However, something goes wrong. The

*letters start
spinning with the
fans, which shake at
the base.*

DAVID
Shit!

*David reaches out
for the switch, but
one of the fans
falls and hits him.*

DAVID
Ow! Fuck!

*David switches the
fans off.*

DAVID
Damn it!

12 y/o Erin enters.

ERIN
Ha! You hurt yourself.

DAVID
You're a demon.

ERIN
Yes.

*22 y/o Henry walks
down the stairs, but
stops to listen to
the conversation.*

DAVID
Really hope Mom finds a therapist for you soon.

ERIN

(flat) They all fear me as they should.

DAVID

You should step into a church, see if your skin burns.

ERIN

God can't hurt me.

HENRY

No but he can hear you.

Henry comes down the stairs and walks up to the project.

He crouches and inspects the contraption.

HENRY

How's this goin'?

DAVID

Bad.

ERIN

Unsurprisingly.

HENRY

Away, demon child!

ERIN

Hmmph.

Erin stomps into the kitchen.

Henry sits on the floor. He places the fan back in position. David places the laptop on his lap and types.

HENRY
Science fair?

DAVID
Yeah.

HENRY
(nods, beat) You know how to fix it?

DAVID
It'll be fine, I just need to fix the spinning.

HENRY
Fix the spinning? They're fans, whadya want them to do?

DAVID
The *fans* are supposed to spin, not the word.

HENRY
Ahhh. So, what's the problem?

DAVID
Program's busted.

HENRY
Well, yeah, but *how's* it busted?

DAVID
(pause) I don't know.

HENRY
Well good, that's the first step of having a problem. Now. Look at the code. Scroll through the set. Think of it like a story. *(coy)* Look for the "therefores" and the "buts".

*David looks through
the code set.*

*Martin enters
through the front
door.*

*Both he and Henry
raise their arms
like Italian
gangsters that
haven't seen each
other in a while.*

MARTIN

Hey! Oh my god, what're you doing back here?!

HENRY

Here for my *shit*. My apartment's a little sad with just a mattress.

MARTIN

You should be happy you got a *room* with how high San Fran rents are. You could be living in a closet.

HENRY

Y'know, I actually tried that, it wasn't *comfy*.

MARTIN

So when'd you get here? The flight must've been hell.

HENRY

Got here this morning. Took a late flight, told Mom to keep it quiet. Thought it'd be a nice surprise for everyone. She's even got me going out for pizza in...shit. Five minutes.

MARTIN

And no visible jet lag. Well done. You'll be back for work on Monday?

HENRY

Oh yeah. Even if I'm not, they won't care. Project's way ahead of schedule.

MARTIN

Wow! Wow wow wow. How's it turning out?

HENRY

Well, we've managed to shave the reaction time down to mere nanoseconds, so pretty soon you'll be able to sit in a room and have tea with Oscar Wilde. Or at least his pre-programmed hologram. Don't know if we can program his level of *wit*.

MARTIN

(shakes his head) That's amazing, man...amazing.

*Martin kisses Henry
on the top of his
head.*

MARTIN (cont'd)

I'm so proud of you, Hen.

*Martin looks down to
see David working.*

He crosses his arms.

MARTIN

How's this going?

*David's head swivels
between looking at
his father and the
laptop.*

DAVID

Uh, it's-it's uh-it's fine.

*David scrambles and
fixes the fan.*

*He presses a few
keys on the laptop.*

HENRY

You found the fix?

DAVID

...Yep!

*David flips the
switches again and
starts the program.*

*Everyone watches as
the fans slowly spin
and the lights turn
on.
The "H" comes on.
Then the "I".*

*But before the "!",
the lights start
blinking on and off,
before a SPARK comes
from the control
box.*

HENRY
Jeez!

DAVID
(whispering) Fuck! Fuck fuck fuck!

*David scrambles to
find his mistake in
the code set.*

MARTIN
Hmph...don't stress yourself out about it. You can only do so much.

Martin exits.

*David looks out with
a dismayed look.*

HENRY
(beat) It's alright. You'll make it work.

DAVID
(beat) Taru!

*Taru enters as David
tinkers with the
device.*

TARU

Ugh what? Hey Henry.

HENRY

Hey Taru! How you been?

TARU

Eh, y'know. Busy being this guy's undo button.

DAVID

Alright. Almost fixed it. Taru, take us back a few minutes.

HENRY

What're you doing?

DAVID

I'm redoing it.

HENRY

What, to impress dad? Just fix it and call him in here.

DAVID

Nah, I just want to redo it.

HENRY

Why?

DAVID

I don't know....So I can prove that...y'know...

HENRY

Prove...what?...Oh. Oh David, you don't have to compare yourself to--

DAVID

Yeah well he does. And everytime I fuck up I slide down in his ranking. Do it, Taru.

TARU

(sigh) Alright.

Taru claps.

Martin ENTERS in
reverse as they
travel back in time.

MARTIN
How's this going?

DAVID
Just you watch.

*David presses the
command.*

*The machine sputters
again, and the fan
falls over.*

MARTIN
Hmph...don't stress yourself out about it. You can only do so much.

Martin exits.

HENRY
It didn't work.

DAVID
Yeah, I noticed.

HENRY
You'll figure it out. But you gotta stop trying to redo things. Just
take the loss.

DAVID
Yeah well losing hurts and you don't know a lot about them, so maybe
don't offer advice on it.

HENRY
(pause) Fair enough. I'll tell you this, though. You wanna impress
dad? Show him that you know how to deal with comin' up short, and how
to fix it.

Henry points to the machine.

DAVID
I don't know how to fix it.

David stands and stomps upstairs.

Henry sighs, then takes the laptop.

HENRY
Heh.

Henry edits a line of code and flips the switches.

HENRY (cont'd)
You actually weren't that far off, buddy.

The command goes through; the word "HI!" scrolls across in red LED as the fans spin.

HENRY
(to Taru) Pretty cool, right?
TARU
Definitely.

Henry checks his phone.

HENRY
(yell upstairs) I'll be right back! Going to pick up the food! Bye, Taru.

TARU
(solemn) Goodbye, Henry.

*Henry exits through
the front door.*

**4 MONTHS AGO FROM
NOW.**

*23 y/o David walks
through the door
with a small duffel.*

DAVID
Hey Mom! I'm home!

*Martin enters with a
sandwich.*

MARTIN
Hey. Dav-o. Whatcha doin' back here?

DAVID
Hey, dad. Just-you know. Here to visit.

MARTIN
Why?

DAVID
I-do I need a reason?

MARTIN
No, no. Just wondering.

*The two walk into
the room. Martin
sits on the chair.
He points to the
couch, and David
takes a seat.*

MARTIN
So how's New York?

DAVID
It's...fine.

MARTIN

(nods, chewing) And what're you up to? Got a job yet?

DAVID

Uh, yeah, but nothing in tech. Not yet, at least.

MARTIN

Right. The restaurant. *(sigh)* You at least get an offer, even an interview?

DAVID

I-y'know, I'm kinda expecting one from this one place, they seemed to like me--

MARTIN

So no.

DAVID

(beat) Yeah.

MARTIN

Well, maybe you can see if they need someone to mop the floors or clean the dishes. You've certainly got the experience for it. *(beat)* Ah, I'm just givin' you guff. *(pause)* You do need to get a job though.

DAVID

I mean, I *have* one. This restaurant is really cool, it's a good job.

MARTIN

But that's not a *job*. You didn't go to college to be a waiter.

DAVID

I think I still have time to figure things out, dad.

MARTIN

My point is you should hit the ground running. Tech is a tough, tough industry kid. You only have so much time to make your mark before you're overshadowed. Out of touch. Old.

DAVID

I-I just want to do cool stuff, y'know?

MARTIN

And that requires *getting a job*.

DAVID

You're using the word job like what I'm doing isn't paying. I'm making money.

MARTIN

Tips are very different from a salary.

DAVID

Well, what would you like? I could get hired straight out of school, get called a wunderkind by my bosses, and be put in charge of building...what was it...

MARTIN

Alright, I get it.

DAVID

Oh yeah! A real life holodeck! Because I've got the skills for that.

MARTIN

Enough. I'm not comparing you to your brother.

DAVID

Yeah but you are. You saying you aren't doesn't make it so. If I go up to a guy and start killing him with a knife, and he starts going "Oh my god! You're stabbing me!" I can't just go "Pfft, what do you mean? I'm just putting a knife in you repeatedly that's not *stabbing*". What are you even trying to do by comparing us? You might as well complain that I'm not running to be President.

MARTIN

I'm *reminding* you where your brother was at your age in the *hope* that it'll *motivate* you to get *moving* on this!

David stands and paces. He throws his hands up.

DAVID

(exasperated, spent) I'm not him. I'm not! Sorry!

MARTIN
I know.

Martin stands.

MARTIN (cont'd)
I'm very aware of that.

Martin exits.

*David sits on the
couch.*

A beat.

*Erin bursts in,
tears streaming down
her face, and
carrying a **broken
laptop.***

ERIN
Fucking asshole! Rahhhhh!!!

*Erin stomps and
throws herself face
first onto the
couch.*

ERIN (cont'd)
(muffled) AHHHHHHH!

DAVID
Hey...hey Erin.

ERIN
(muffled) Hi.

DAVID
(beat) You...alright?

ERIN
(sits up, shrill) No!

DAVID
What happened?

*Erin reaches into
her backpack and
pulls out a broken
laptop.*

ERIN
That mouth breathing bitch! Erica Albright smashed my fucking laptop!
And-and I-I fucking.

Erin begins to cry.

ERIN (cont'd)
I was supposed to submit my college application today. But now the
computers broken, and the bus was late, and the submission time was 5
minutes ago--and--

DAVID
Jesus! Did you tell Mom?!

ERIN
She's at work! Her phone is off!

ERIN
What about Dad?

ERIN
He wouldn't pick up! Oh god, oh god what am I gonna do?

DAVID
Go, go see Dad. He's upstairs.

Erin exits upstairs.

DAVID
Taru! Quick!

Taru enters.

TARU

Hey, hey, what is good in the neighborhood?

DAVID

Erin's computer got broken by some girl, and she was supposed to submit her college app, but now she can't.

TARU

Oh dang.

DAVID

Yeah. C'mon, let's go. Take me back to this morning, I'll stop the laptop from being destroyed.

TARU

Aw, nice big brother. Even for the demon girl, you'll help out.

DAVID

She's still my damn sister.

TARU

Alright...wait, but...if she doesn't get the application in, and we change it so she does, doesn't that mean we could be taking a spot away from another kid?

DAVID

Oh...yeah. Oh! Quick, look into the future!

TARU

Oh right! Duh! Time powers!

*Taru rubs his
temples and closes
his eyes.*

TARU

Hhmmmmmm. *(opens eyes)* Oh. Oh god. Oh sweet god.

DAVID

What?

TARU

Yeah we gotta get her application in.

DAVID
Really?

TARU
Yeah. Oh boy the guy who gets in if she doesn't...*(shakes head)* let's just say he's got a passion for keeping more than just country clubs white.

DAVID
Stopping a future scummy racist *and* helping my sister? Win win. Let's do it.

TARU
Yessir, here we go! Boom!

Taru claps. A cloud of smoke appears. David and Taru exit.

Erin and Sally enter.

NOW.

Erin is sitting on the floor going through a box, as Sally sits on the couch doing the same.

ERIN
(playing nice) Ok, mom. So.

SALLY
No.

ERIN
Do you know what I was gonna ask?

SALLY
You were going to try and fail to convince me to let you go alone on move in day.

ERIN

Ok, yeah, but--

SALLY

I don't want you going alone. That's it.

ERIN

You don't have anything more to add to your argument?

SALLY

I don't *need* to add anything more, I'm your mother.

ERIN

(beat) That's not a very good argument.

SALLY

Doesn't have to be.

ERIN

Can I at least get a more concrete reason? Something *logical*?

SALLY

I don't want you to move in alone because *I*, as your *mother*, deserve to be there to see you off. Maybe you should give me a more concrete reason why this is something you want to argue about.

ERIN

(beat) Y'know, I'm about to be a college freshman. I think I'm-I'm intelligent and *mature* enough to take care of myself--

SALLY

Ha! I've never met a college freshman I'd describe as intelligent and mature.

ERIN

Not even your own children?

SALLY

Nope. David brought a "no girls allowed" sign for his dorm. He was trying to be ironic, but the girls didn't get that. Roommate hated him for it.

ERIN

And Henry?

Silence. Sally looks out, caught off guard.

ERIN

Mom. *(beat, Sally doesn't respond)* Thought you would've wanted me to be like him.

Martin walks downstairs, carrying a heavy box.

MARTIN

Al-right.

Martin puts the box on the coffee table. He stands over it.

Sally takes his hand.

ERIN

Is that...

SALLY

Yeah...

Martin takes a deep breath through his nose, and opens the box.

Gently, he pulls out an old decorated keyboard, the keys painted with pastel colors.

Sally reaches in and finds an old photo.

*David enters through
the kitchen door.*

SALLY
Davey you're just in time. We're, um..

DAVID
Is that all Henry's stuff?

SALLY
Some of it. We'll either donate or put the rest in storage, but your
dad thought we'd want some of this.

MARTIN
I get dibs on whatever I want, though.

DAVID
(sarcastic) Seems fair.

MARTIN
That it is.

*David walks to the
box and looks in.
He pulls out a small
box and opens it.
Martin grabs it from
him.*

MARTIN
Dibs.

DAVID
Wow.

MARTIN
Do you even know what it is?

DAVID
No, that's why I was *opening it*.

MARTIN

It's a soldering iron. You don't need one, do you?

DAVID

I just wanted to *see it*.

MARTIN

There's plenty more in the box for you to see, don't worry.

*Erin looks up at her
father and brother
as they rifle
through the box.*

ERIN

Bit of a grave robber vibe here, hm?

DAVID

You don't have to try and make a joke whenever you see a chance,
y'know. Because sometimes what you say just doesn't make any sense.

ERIN

Yeah...well...you're going to die alone.

SALLY

Jeez!

DAVID

Wow.

MARTIN

Wow (*chuckles*). Woof, kid.

DAVID

Demon child. (*beat*) I-I never know how to respond to that.

ERIN

Exactly.

MARTIN

It's a surprisingly effective comeback.

DAVID

Doesn't really take much thought though.

ERIN

And yet you're incredibly single.

MARTIN

Hey Sal, have you seen that Green Lantern figure of his?

SALLY

Whose, Henry's?

MARTIN

Yeah, I wanted to put it in my office. He always loved that thing..

Sally looks over at David. Their eyes widen when they make eye contact.

SALLY

Dunno...maybe check upstairs? Might've fallen behind or under something.

MARTIN

(sigh) Hope that's the case..

Martin exits upstairs.

David sees his mother still clutching the photo.

DAVID

What photo is that?

SALLY

It's um...

Sally turns the photo to show her kids.

*The photo is of her
and Henry as a
toddler.*

SALLY (cont'd)

...us. When Henry was only 2. We were at your aunt Margaret's wedding.

ERIN

The third one?

SALLY

The second. *(beat, looks at David)* Henry took a handful of the cake before Margie got the chance *(giggles)*.

*Sally swallows and
blinks, trying to
fight the wave of
emotions.*

*Sally places the
photo down on the
table.*

*She sniffles and
clasps her hands.*

*Erin looks through
the box of Henry's
stuff.*

SALLY (cont'd)

She even--

*Erin pulls an old
stuffed animal, a
yellow lab, from the
box.*

*Sally seizes in
silence.*

She holds out her hands, and Erin passes her the dog.

Sally caresses the toy. Tears begin to softly fall down her face.

SALLY

(soft, breaking) God, I just-- I-I want my boy back.

Sally wipes her eyes.

Erin looks at her brother, and shrugs. She has no idea what to do.

David looks at his mother. He swallows.

David moves off the chair to his mother's side. He touches her shoulder.

DAVID

(quietly) You'll see him again soon. Taru, freeze!

Everyone but David freezes in place.

DAVID (cont'd)

C'mere, Taru.

Taru steps out from the kitchen.

TARU

What, what do you want?

DAVID

(*pause*) This is...just hear me out.

TARU

Oh my--David, *dude!*

DAVID

(*points to Sally*) Look at her.

TARU

Oh, that is low. Using your grieving mother to try and justify--

DAVID

I don't want to bring him back just for me! You keep trying to say that I'm selfish, but how is it selfish to give a mother back her son?!

TARU

Yeah, well, why do *you* want him back?

DAVID

So I can be with my brother, what?

TARU

Yes, but what would you get from that, I'm saying. Hm? How do you benefit from bringing Henry back? (*beat*) Maybe you get a father figure who actually likes you?

DAVID

Ok, first of all! My dad *likes* me. Secondly, do I need a reason to save my brother?!

TARU

Yes. Otherwise you wouldn't want to do it in the first place.

DAVID

Look. Look at my mom. See how she's crying? She also misses him. She said that she wants Henry back too. So-so if I don't-if I don't do this, if I don't try and save him, I've failed her too! Right? And I can't...*fail!*

TARU

David...

DAVID

I'm sick of failing. *(beat)* This is my last chance. You gonna listen to me, or just plug your ears again?

TARU

I don't need to look into the future to know how this is gonna end.

DAVID

Oh?

TARU

Yeah. You're gonna try and change it over and over again, realize you can't, set it back to normal again, and ask me to erase the memory yet again.

DAVID

Again? What do you--

TARU

Do you really think this is the first time we've been through this?

DAVID

(beat) When...

TARU

Couple times when you were younger. You'd come crying to me, saying the same crap you're saying now. You'd travel back, do the thing, save the bro, realize the horrors you've unleashed, and then you'd make me erase it from ever happening, rip it from your memory, so you don't have to remember your fuckup.

DAVID

I...I failed?

TARU

(beat) Yeah.

*Tears form in
David's eyes.*

DAVID

(pause) Bullshit.

TARU
Bullshit?!

DAVID
Yeah. Bullshit. I'm calling bullshit. If that really happened, why wouldn't you just tell me about that in the first place

TARU
So you wouldn't have to live with your mistakes, you little monster!

DAVID
Well if I've done it once I can do it again!

TARU
No! Oh my god that's the whole point! No matter what you do, something horrible will happen. Henry has to stay dead. I'd rather just hurt your feelings than allow you to cause an alternate future which I'd rather not go into detail about.

DAVID
Bullshit.

TARU
No, David--

DAVID
We both know that I've done good with time travel. I've changed things for the better! Erin wouldn't be going to college without me! You're just lying, refusing to do what I want because of *your* baggage!

TARU
My *baggage*?! Oh! Ok!

DAVID
You're just hung up on the fact that the last time you undid death, you got put in this *rock*.

TARU
Oh! We're going there. Ok. I'm not lying, David. Because if I were lying, I would be saying that you *aren't* a piece of shit! You're the worst master I've ever had! You're just a self centered, sad,

pathetic little bastard who throws tantrums and always has to have it his way. You annoying little fuck!

DAVID

If I can't change it...then...just let me say goodbye to him. Take me to his final day.

TARU

No, David...

DAVID

A goodbye. No more, no less. I-I didn't...I didn't get to. I've never been able to.

TARU

You realize how suspicious this sounds, right?

DAVID

Taru, look at me. Don't look at the future, just look at me. I'll only say goodbye. I won't change the past. Just take me to that day.

TARU

(beat) Swear on it.

DAVID

I promise.

TARU

Is this your command?

DAVID

It is.

The spirit claps his hands. They disappear into a cloud of smoke.

Set shifts to the living room in shadows.

A NEW NOW.

David sits on the couch and a spotlight comes down.

He stands, confused.

In the shadows behind him, Martin Sally and Erin move a table on stage.

David stands, and the couch is moved off stage.

Martin Sally and Erin sit at the table. The spotlight expands to cover the table.

DAVID
Did I do it? Did I save him, did it work?

SALLY
Did what work?

DAVID
Oh, uh, I--

The light comes up on the front door as it opens.

Henry enters with a pizza.

HENRY
Pizza's here!

SALLY
Yay! Pizza!

ERIN
Finally!

MARTIN
God, I'm starving!

DAVID
Henry!

David walks to the table.

HENRY
Yeah? What's up Dave?

DAVID
I-I did it.

David walks up to Henry.

DAVID (cont'd)
You're really here. You're back.

David hugs Henry.

HENRY
I mean, I wasn't gone long. Just went to get the pizza.

Henry places the pizza on the table.

MARTIN
Smells good!

HENRY
Meat Lover's with hot sauce, as requested.

MARTIN

Ah, good lad.

*Martin pats Henry on
the shoulder.*

MARTIN (cont'd)
C'mon Dave! Pizza's here!

*David looks
suspicious.
He walks over and
sits at the table.*

HENRY
How many slices you want, Dave?

DAVID
Two. *(beat)* I don't like to be called Dave, though.

*The rest of the
family is confused.*

ERIN
Yes you do.

SALLY
Honey, you've wanted to be called Dave since you were 17. What changed?

DAVID
Oh, fuck, uh, nothing. It's fine. Forget it. I'm Dave! Let's eat pizza.

MARTIN
(excited but subdued) Yes, let's.

HENRY
Ah, crap. Lemonade's not here. Sorry, I'll be right back!

*Henry exits into the
kitchen.*

*David reaches for
his slices.*

MARTIN

Ah! Not yet, wait for Henry.

ERIN

So I saw on the news that today will probably be the end!

SALLY

Looks so!

MARTIN

Yeah! Today's the day!

DAVID

...The day for what?

All but David laugh.

*Henry enters with a
pitcher of lemonade
and five glasses.*

HENRY

What's so funny?

ERIN

David doesn't know what today is!

DAVID

Guy...seriously. What's today?

*All are silent and
confused.*

HENRY

Did...you not see the news?

ERIN

You seriously haven't even checked your phone? It's everywhere.

SALLY

Honey, what've you been doing all day to be so out of the loop?

MARTIN

Dave, where you been for the last six years?

DAVID

I-uh...

*Henry puts his hand
on David's shoulder.*

HENRY

Don't worry. I know it's scary. You might've just blocked it out. But any minute now, we're all going to move on to a better place.

DAVID

What?!

HENRY

Yeah...it finally happened. They're gonna launch the nukes.

DAVID

What?! Who? Russia?

ERIN

What? No...

MARTIN

Russia hasn't been a country for years.

DAVID

What?

SALLY

It's Finland, honey.

ERIN

Who else would it be?

MARTIN

Their conquest can't be stopped. If we have to die so they're finally stopped, then I am happy to, for we are the foundation for the future of our nation. (*salute*) Hail America!

ERIN SALLY AND HENRY
(*salute*) Hail America!

DAVID
Oh, oh oh no.

MARTIN
We may die, but at least *some of us* will live.

ERIN
Some of us with *fashion*. They've got all the money, after all.

MARTIN
Now now, it's our fault we can't afford membership to the Ark. We could've worked harder and made more money, (*shrugs*) but we didn't.

*The faint sound of a
rocket engine is
heard in the
distance.*

HENRY
Oh!

SALLY
Looks like it's time!

*A bright orange glow
erupts in the
distance in the
woods behind David,
and an ominous
RUMBLING is growing
louder.*

DAVID
Oh my god.

MARTIN
Oh! Don't forget to eat some pizza! And..

ERIN, SALLY, MARTIN, HENRY

Happy End Day!

DAVID

TARU STOP!

*Everyone but David
freezes.*

*Taru walks down the
stairs.*

TARU

You little piece of shit. I warned you. I told you not to do it. You couldn't just *listen*. And you *lied to me*! You-you used me, you broke your promise man!

DAVID

I mean...your whole thing is that you get used, right?

TARU

(scream) Shut up! You never learn! You never listen! I'm not your-your...I'm not your servant!

DAVID

You couldn't expect me to not use the chance I had.

Taru pushes David.

TARU

Nyaahhh! *(pause)* You're not gonna get away with this.

DAVID

It's already done.

TARU

Yeah, and the world is *exploding* right outside!

DAVID

That's why I'm going to fix it. So what happened? Why is Finland nuking the world?

TARU

It turns out that Finland has this secret society that's planning government infiltration and eventually world domination. It's an admittedly good plan, too.

DAVID

Woah...alright then. Finland please, Taru. Lets go.

TARU

(angry) So...you're just gonna ignore me. When I told you that there's no way to have everything you want.

DAVID

I'll figure it out. Let's go. Take me back.

Taru sighs and claps his hands.

Black out.

Lights go back on. David and Taru are in the same position, but the rest of the family is wearing fedoras. Nothing else has changed.

ERIN, SALLY, MARTIN, HENRY
Happy End Day!

DAVID

Damn it. Again, Taru.

TARU

So it begins.

Taru claps again. Black out. Lights up.

*The family doesn't
have fedoras
anymore. They all
have mustaches and
visors like Cyclops
from X-Men.*

ERIN, SALLY, MARTIN, HENRY
(flat, robotic) Happy Day of End.

DAVID
Shit! Again, Taru!

Taru claps again.

*Black out. Lights
up.*

*The family are all
pointing guns at
each other.*

SALLY
Happy End Day, *motherfuckers*.

ERIN
So it is, "mother".

MARTIN
You're not my real daughter, Erin.

ERIN
I know.

HENRY
And I--

DAVID
Alright stop!

Everyone freezes.

*David crumbles to
the floor.*

DAVID (cont'd)

Damn it. Damn you.

TARU

I *told you*. I told you again and again, but you didn't listen.

DAVID

So is this the end? Is this how everything dies?

TARU

Yeah. You, your family, and 60% of the world population.

DAVID

Oh god.

TARU

Yeah. Smooth fuckin' move there, ace.

DAVID

It can't be inevitable. There's gotta be a way.

TARU

Nope. It's all heads here.

DAVID

Is there at least a future? Do things get back on track?

TARU

Get back on track, what?! No! They used the nukes! The best humanity has is some caveman Mad Max shit until they all die of radiation poisoning!

DAVID

Oh god..

TARU

And you wanna know the best part? The irony of it all? Humanity could've lived long after this. Accomplished great things. This world is headed towards the same ending without humans that it would've experienced with them. But because of you, the inevitable has only shifted.

DAVID

What ending? What are you talking about?

TARU

Would you like to see? *(beat)* Ask me to take you to the end.

DAVID

Is this some kind of trick? To-to get back at me?

TARU

(beat) No.

DAVID

(hesitantly) Then...take us to the end.

TARU

Great...because *fuck you*, David.

DAVID

Wait what--

Taru claps his hands. He takes David by the arm and marches him upstage, as the rest of the family exits and the set is moved offstage.

Darkness.

Light creeps in, focusing on DAVID as he walks onstage, unsure of what's happening.

A semi-circular projection screen moves behind Taru and David as they walk upstage.

DAVID
Taru?!

*His voice echoes
through the void.*

DAVID
Taru where are you? Where did you take me?

*A booming but
nasally voice
startles David.*

TARU (V.O.)
I warned you, David.

*David spins, looking
for the source of
the voice.*

DAVID
Taru, where are you?

TARU (V.O.)
I told you over and over again Davey boy. *Don't fuck with time.*

DAVID
Oh yeah, says the time-traveling spirit who *let me.*

TARU (V.O.)
Screw you! This is all on you. I *trusted you*, I gave you a final *favor*, and you took advantage of that.

DAVID
I can *fix this!* I can make everything right!

TARU (V.O.)
Your version of 'right' will result in *nothing* but pain!

DAVID
It's worked pretty well so far!

TARU (V.O.)
You blew up the world!

DAVID

Well it had before now, at least! You can't blame me for trying.

TARU (V.O.)

You are selfish, David. You try to wrestle control from forces infinitely beyond you.

DAVID

Yeah, you've said that. It's old at this point. Just...will you let me make this right?

TARU (V.O.)

That will depend on what you call *right*, David. But first you must ask yourself; are you willing to *face your fears*?

Two hands reach out from the darkness and pull David into the dark.

TARU (V.O., cont'd)

Now...welcome to the end, David.

Taru claps. A projection comes onto the screen.

Space. A deep blue light and a dying red sun far away, streams of fiery gas dissipating.

Galaxies and nebulas in the distance begin to fade into wispy streams of gases.

Stars blink in the distance, and

*asteroids float
through the void.*

There is no life.

**EARTH. THE END OF IT
ALL. BILLIONS OF
YEARS FROM NOW.**

DAVID
What is this?

TARU
The end of everything. Welcome to nothingness.

*David turns, and
looks out above the
audience.*

DAVID
Wow...

TARU
Yup. There's the sun, about to go out forever. Earth is nothing more than a dull rock, and the rest of the universe is about to join it in a lifeless state. Life as you know it is over. Eternal darkness is upon us all. Scary shit, right? Take it in. Feel the terror, bitch.

*David looks out,
amazed and terrified
at the
unrecognizable
world.*

DAVID
Oh god...this is what we're headed towards? What happened?

TARU
Life. Things just went on and on...until they stopped.

DAVID
So...is this it? Life is over, death rules the universe? Is this what eternity will be from now on?

TARU

(beat) I don't know. I've never looked beyond this point.

DAVID

Why?

TARU

I was scared.

DAVID

Of what?

TARU

(pause) That this would be it. Forever. No more life, no more anything. I don't want to witness that. This moment alone is enough to scare the shit out of me.

Taru sits down next to David.

DAVID

The end of it all.

TARU

Mhmm.

DAVID

Why did you want to take me here?

David looks out over the audience, taking in the view.

TARU

I wanted you to come here to see something beyond your control. What do you see, David?

TARU

Death. Nothingness. (pause) The inevitable.

TARU

(pokes David) Exactly, you dingus! No matter what happens, this is what happens.

DAVID
Ahhh, ok.

TARU
(nods) Yeah, you see where I'm going with this.

DAVID
I can fix it.

TARU
You can't.

DAVID
I'll try.

TARU
Won't matter. Henry was meant to die when he did. When you stopped that, the universe had to correct it. And the only way for that to happen was Finnish nuclear apocalypse. No matter what changes, if Henry lives, the Fins kill everyone. If he dies, like he was supposed to--

DAVID
--the secret society fails. No one else has to die.

TARU
Yeah.

DAVID
And there's no way around it?

TARU
None.

Taru sits.

DAVID
Damn...

TARU

I wanted there to be a way. I did. *(pause)* Hiding Henry's car keys so he couldn't go out and get t-boned, it was a good idea. Should've been easy to save him. But it's never simple when it comes to death.

DAVID

That's nice of you to say. Thought you were mad at me.

David sits.

TARU

(shrugs) I'm mad you hurt me. You promised one thing, you did another. Just makes me feel...like a thing.

DAVID

I'm sorry...that I lied. It wasn't ok of me. It's...it's kind of easy to forget you're...a person. Horrible phrasing, but you know what I mean.

TARU

Right, right. Like you know what *I* mean when I say that I'm sorry Henry can't be brought back, because he's my favorite of you two.

DAVID

Yikes, ooh. Hitting a *little* too close to home there, bud.

TARU

(nods, pause) My dad didn't hide his disappointment in me either.

DAVID

You almost caused human extinction. Was kinda warranted then.

TARU

Ugh fine, fair. *(pause)* Bitch.

DAVID

You can't let any slight go, can you?

TARU

Neither can you, so don't start. And thank you, I appreciate the apology. *(beat)* It's no fun for me either. Watching you with your dad makes me pretty mad too.

DAVID

Thanks. I just--I don't know what to do.

TARU

You ever just...talk to him about it?

DAVID

I have...I tell him that "I know I'm not Henry", and he says "no shit, you're David." Almost uses my name like it's an insult.

TARU

What's his issue? What's he got against you?

DAVID

My only excellment is in falling short of expectations. When you come after Henry, it's hard to shape up.

TARU

He did make a holodeck.

DAVID

He made a *holodeck*. How do I follow that?

TARU

He was awesome. I think we're in the same boat with dads.

DAVID

How's that?

TARU

Both think we're screwups. There's no way for us to escape the expectations set against us. Only difference is that it was my own fault. Only thing you did was not be as smart as your brother. It's not fair that you're always measured next to him.

DAVID

Dude, you tried to save *lives*. You thought you were doing the right thing, and you were doing it because you had the power to do something. *(pause)* Doing what you think is right is nothing to be ashamed of.

TARU

Inevitability isn't fun to deal with. *(pause)* When my father locked me away, he knew that I was gonna screw things up, and it wouldn't even be my fault. He condemned me to be history's janitor...He...he

doesn't just want to punish me. He wants me to come away from this, a trillion years later, never wanting to use my powers again. He's treating *me* as a curse. A damned mistake. But he created me! So what am I supposed to do?

Taru stands and looks off into the distance.

TARU (cont'd)

(yelling) Do you want me to die, father?! Do you wish I was never born?! You made me! You made me who I am, you gave *this* to me!

David takes Taru's hand and looks at the ground.

Taru glances at David, and sits down.

DAVID

Because of you, I got to do so much. I saw *Star Wars* in the theater when it was first released, I met knights and cavemen, and learned how the pyramids were built. I got to do that with my brother. You're not a curse, or a mistake, or a screwup. Neither of us are.

TARU

I wish your dad would realize that.

TARU

You're always going to be the second child. But you're the child who gets to grow older than the first. A son dying before his father goes against everything we're supposed to understand.

DAVID

So is time travel and spirits. *(beat)* Henry had a whole career ahead of him.

TARU

He was going to do great things.

DAVID

And I never will. (*chuckles*) Quite the step down for my dad, huh? Going from holograms to password protection.

TARU

Your dad idolizes him. He was his greatest creation. But so are you. And Erin.

DAVID

Well let's not go too far.

TARU

...Martin had his son ripped away from him. I cried when he died and I knew him since he was a kid, but Martin, he created Henry. He cradled him in his arms and watched him grow. There's nothing either of us can imagine to...to...(*shrug*) to understand that.

DAVID

Henry became what I wanted Dad to be. He actually y'know...I don't think my dad hates me, but he doesn't give me a lot of reason to think otherwise either. He takes care of me, yeah, but...it was always Henry who put in that extra effort. That support, that...the hand on your shoulder, that makes you think that everything's gonna be alright. That you got this. Then, when he died, Dad skipped right over me and put his all into Erin.

TARU

(*sarcastic*) She turned out well.

DAVID

(*chuckles*) At least I was able to make one good change in the past. She gets to go to college and study "art".

TARU

No specific kind? Just art?

DAVID

Just art.

TARU

Well, we're all just lucky because if she didn't go (*throat-cutting motion*). Honestly that future is worse than the one you caused.

DAVID

At least I did something right.

TARU

She's headed right into the unknown, the next stage of her life. So are you. First time you're not gonna have your ol' pal Taru to clean up your mistakes.

DAVID

Scary thought. But can you blame me for trying to micromanage everything? I don't want to be a screwup. I want to get things right the first time. Because people remember when you screw up. It makes them not like you. And I hate that. So I'd rather have not fucked up at all. Think most people would agree with me.

TARU

You're not a fan of what's supposed to be. Welcome to *life*.

DAVID

It's gonna be weird not having you with me. Definitely gonna take some getting used to. *(beat)* I still don't want to say goodbye though.

TARU

To be honest? Me neither.

DAVID

It's gonna be weird not being able to make what I want to happen happen. I'll probably shout "Taru" on instinct a couple times.

TARU

Eh, you'll be fine.

DAVID

No, I won't. I won't have any idea what to do with myself.

TARU

Well...you just gotta grab life by the reins and say hey, I'm taking control here. Or no, that's a bad example, uh-hh, what's another metaphor, maybe--

DAVID

A river. *(pause)* Just flow with the river, don't fight it, but try

DAVID (cont'd)

and forge your own path and make it to shore. Even if you can't see how you're gonna do it at the moment. It's about pushing towards the place you want to be, and overcoming the stuff you can't control. Even if...in the end, it all means nothing. *(quickness smile)* If I didn't at least try to save Henry, does that make me a bad person?

TARU

No. It means that you're admitting that you have no control over it. Even if it means accepting the worst pain you've experienced in your life.

DAVID

Then...for real this time. No lies. Can I say goodbye to him?

TARU

I can arrange that. But you're gonna want to watch this first.

David and Taru watch as the bright wisps of gas emanating from the sun fade away, and soon the large bright ball in the sky goes out.

Darkness.

Taru claps. The projection screen disappears in the darkness. The Living Room.

The rest of the family is still frozen as Taru and David enter.

Taru snaps and Henry unfreezes.

HENRY

Taru? David, what're you doing?

Taru looks at David.

DAVID

I have to do something. With Taru. And I think this may be the last time that we see each other, so...

HENRY

David, we can't stop it (*points to the nuclear explosion*). We tried, remember? Nothing we did worked, no point in history we could change that would make everything alright.

DAVID

So why aren't you freaking out more?

HENRY

I've done what I can. That's all I can do.

DAVID

That's what I have to do now.

HENRY

What? No, look, self sacrifice is noble and all, but there's no way we could stop it.

DAVID

There's one way.

A beat.

DAVID (cont'd)

But I--

*David's hands
tremble. He looks
back at Taru.*

DAVID (cont'd)

I don't know if I can do it.

HENRY

(*smiles*) Whatever you have to do to fix this, it's ok.

DAVID
But you--

HENRY
Ah! No spoilers. It's for the best.

DAVID
I-I-I can't-I don't want to do this anymore. Taru let's--

HENRY
--Nope. Hold on. *(pause, smile at David, look at Taru)* Taru, do whatever you need to make this right.

TARU
(nods) I'll miss you, Henry.

HENRY
I'll miss you too, rock man.

Taru smiles.

Henry looks at his trembling, crying brother.

HENRY (cont'd)
It's alright. I promise.

They hug. David returns to Taru. They walk into the kitchen. A CLAP is heard and smoke billows from the doorway.

A beat. Henry looks at his frozen family. He kisses Sally's head, and rubs Martin's bald head. He knocks on

*Erin's skull and
listens.*

HENRY
Oh wow, there's something in there.

He ruffles her hair.

*Henry sighs, and
slowly walks towards
the front door.*

HENRY (cont'd)
So long, then.

Henry exits.

*Erin and Martin
exit.*

*Sally walks over to
the couch.*

**NOW. THE ORIGINAL
NOW.**

The Living Room.

Night.
*Sally holds the
stuffed dog from
before.*

*David enters from
the kitchen.*

SALLY
Hey...what were you doing outside?

DAVID
Just...hangin.

SALLY

Fireflies are out in *force* tonight, you see 'em?

DAVID

Yeah, there's...a lot. (*pause*) You alright?

SALLY

Nah. C'mere, sit down.

David sits in the chair and lounges back. He rubs his eyes.

SALLY (cont'd)

I warned you, emotions would be--be high.

DAVID

Heh. Yeah, yeah, no kidding. Maybe I shouldn't have come up.

SALLY

Mmm. It's a weird feeling. Leaving what was your *everything* behind. Knowing that wherever you go, you're always going to leave a little piece of it behind. That you'll never be whole again, but, somehow, you can live with that. Somehow you *have* to live with that.

DAVID

And you're ok with that?

SALLY

Nope. Never will be. And yet, *that's* ok. Because for as much as I hate it, and I wish it never happened, it did. This is the life I've been given and the hand I have to play with.

DAVID

You surrender to the river.

SALLY

(*smile*) Let the water carry you and soon you'll arrive someplace new. But what's new is always scary. It's uncertain and terrifying and you never know what's right around the corner. But it's still better than living in the past.

DAVID

Living in the past? You lost your son, you don't just move on from that.

SALLY

No you don't. You never do. But what happens when you try to fight the river?

DAVID

You drown.

SALLY

Yep. Just gotta keep moving forward. Because if I don't, why am I still here? I've still got a lot of life ahead of me. All you can do is try. But it's like walking with an anchor attached to your foot. I have moments where I almost feel normal. I go to work, do tree stuff, come home, see my family. But then I'm reminded of what I'm missing. And the memories, the feelings come rushing back. Like--

DAVID

Like it just happened.

SALLY

Yeah. But you can't ignore it. That's not how any of this works. All you can do is hold onto what you have. Even if it's just a feeling of love and not the person themselves.

DAVID

Like Erin?

SALLY

(beat) Yeah.

DAVID

You know you can't baby her forever, right?

SALLY

Baby her? I barely babied her when she was a baby, she wouldn't let me. Whenever I'd try and do something or talk with her she'd just grunt. Like "hmmph". I swear, she sounded like my grandfather. I-I just...she's my last one. The last bird to leave the nest, and leave her mother wondering if they'll be alright. Or if they'll ever come back.

DAVID

That's fair. To you. But not to her.

SALLY

(beat) Probably not.

DAVID

Lightning can't strike twice, can it?

SALLY

I just-I don't understand why she wants to go alone in the first place. Is it my fault? Did I fail? Is this just her trying to hurt me?

DAVID

(shrugs) Probably not. She's not...*that* awful. She probably just wants to begin her own journey. Most of the attention she's gotten here is for being a demon child, living in the shadow of her

DAVID *(cont'd)*

brothers. Maybe going off alone is her way of finding herself. And you can't want to stop her from doing that.

A beat. Sally looks down.

SALLY

(nods) You're not wrong. I'll *think about it*. *(beat)* Look at you. Figuring things out.

DAVID

Hmph. Yeah...*(pause)* Y'know I think I might head back to the city tomorrow. Kinda did what I had to do here.

Taru pokes his head into the room.

SALLY

(nods) Oh! You sure?

DAVID

Yeah.

*Taru sits on the
staircase.*

SALLY

Ok...well, it's your choice.

DAVID

So...I'll just take an Uber or something to the station.

SALLY

Well, when's the bus leaving?

DAVID

Figured I'd take the early one. 8 am.

SALLY

And you've already bought the ticket?

DAVID

...Yeah.

SALLY

Well. Why don't you save yourself some money, because 8am is around when your dad has to head to the office, clean out the last of his stuff. So...he could..

DAVID

Oh...uh.

SALLY

I'm sure he'll be nice. And it'll be early too. You guys should stop and get some breakfast. *And talk.*

*Sally stands, still
holding the dog.*

*She kisses David on
his head.*

SALLY (cont'd)

Goodnight.

DAVID
G'night.

*Sally exits
upstairs.*

*Taru waltzes over
and slumps on the
couch, putting his
feet up.*

TARU
(*sigh*) So that's it?

DAVID
Yeah.

TARU
You're gonna leave, just like that?

DAVID
Yeah. There's nothing more I need to do here.

TARU
Mean.

DAVID
That's--c'mon you know I didn't mean--

TARU
--Yeah of course you didn't, I'm fuckin' with you.

DAVID
You sad to see me go?

TARU
Inevitability, man...knowing doesn't make it hurt any less.

DAVID
God, just say yes. Be *clear*, for like, once in your life.

TARU

(beat) Nah.

DAVID

(laughs) Fine.

TARU

So your dad's gonna take you to the bus.

DAVID

Yeah.

TARU

You gonna...say anything to him?

DAVID

(pause) Yeah.

TARU

You got anything planned out? An impassioned speech maybe? (pause)
What're you gonna say?

DAVID

(content) I don't know.

TARU

And that's ok?

DAVID

Yeah.

TARU

Oh hey. So...with the whole knowing you caused a nuclear apocalypse thing. You want me to make you forget that? Wipe the ol' memory bank?

DAVID

No...I think I'll hold onto it. As a reminder.

The two stand and hug.

DAVID (cont'd)

G'night.

TARU
Good night.

DAVID
And...I guess goodbye.

TARU
(beat, shrug) Maybe...or maybe not.

Taru winks.

*David smiles back,
then exits upstairs.*

Taru sighs.

TARU (cont'd)
Maybe you'll be alright, kid.

Taru exits.

*Lights come down and
the diner set is
rolled up center
stage.*

*Martin and David
enter and sit in the
booth.*

MARTIN
Ooog. So why're you leaving so early?

DAVID
I want to get back home with enough time to get some work done. Wifi on the bus doesn't work well for coding.

MARTIN
(nods) Good. Get ahead of the curve. *(beat)* How's it going?

DAVID
The job? Uh...uh. Y'know. Fine. Not great, just-just fine.

MARTIN

Why's that?

DAVID

Bosses are asking a lot of us. They want--like--this password recovery system that works without them having to go into their emails and going through the whole reset your password spiel.

MARTIN

So what's the problem?

DAVID

So, we're working off this idea--my idea, actually--

MARTIN

Your idea?

DAVID

Yeah. I pitched it a week ago, and we're trying it out.

MARTIN

(nods) Huh.

DAVID

It sort of works. Basically, I thought that if we can't send stuff to their emails, we send it to their data. Reinstar is a data storage company, and if we have data that shows that the user is who they say they are, why not let them in? Like if they have a black dog named Zeke, and a picture from 2012 from when they adopted zeke, they can answer a security question about when they adopted zeke. Then we look at the metadata of the photo of the black dog in their file, and if it was taken in 2012, it's them! It's not perfect, but it might work.

MARTIN

(impressed) It...really might. Well done. *(beat)* See what happens when you grind it out? Good stuff happens when you apply yourself. Even if it, yk, a small victory. Getting your idea in the trial phase is just the first step. Might not work out.

DAVID

Maybe it *will* work out.

MARTIN

Maybe. Maybe not. But don't worry about it. You're bound to take a few hits, mess up a little bit, it happens.

DAVID

Ok...you're...you're still proud that I did this, right?

MARTIN

(pause, feigning) Yeah! Yeah of course! It's great!...For you!

DAVID

Alright...uh. Hahah. I-I kinda...you hear yourself, right?

MARTIN

What? What'd I do?

DAVID

You've gotten good at hiding it, but there's always a slight implication in your voice. Like you're trying to compare--

MARTIN

Oh come on. We've through this back and forth a thousand times, I don't compare you to--

DAVID

(taking command) --But you do. You do. Whether you mean it or not, you always end up comparing me to Henry. And it's...that's not fair to me. You don't need to constantly remind me that I'm worse than him. I *know*. And I can't accept that, so I try to undo that, and I try to be better for you, and I can't. I can't do that. But, *but*, I get it. Weirdly, I do. *(pause)* I lost him too, but you and I lost Henry in different ways. And I'm never gonna understand that.

A long beat.

MARTIN

I'm...sorry you feel that way. I *don't* try to put you down, I don't. But I want you to be better. I do want you to be like your brother. Y'know, I think we can agree that Henry was...he was incredible. You should want to be like him, everyone should. And...thank you. For saying that. If you ever have kids, do whatever you can so what happened to your brother never happens to them.

David nods.

MARTIN (cont'd)

When...*it* happened I just. I shut down. I lost my everything. And you, and Erin, and your mom, you're my everything but Henry was *everything*, and now he's gone. And I put on this brave face, like nothing happened, because I couldn't fathom it. My son was stolen from me in a flash, and I wasn't there to do anything about it. One minute I'm coming home from work to find my son surprising us with a visit. Next thing I know, I'm looking down at a cold, empty body in a morgue. It made no sense. Sons are supposed to lose their fathers, not the other way around. I was staring into a void...I had no idea what to do for the longest time. I was just...existing. Hoping for something to fill that hole he left. I needed something to latch onto, something that-that would--

DAVID

Bring him back...

MARTIN

Yeah...

DAVID

But he's not coming back. And there'll never be anyone like him.

MARTIN

(smile, proud) No there won't...he was one of a kind. I'm doing this for him. Llama.

DAVID

I know. He'd be proud. I wish he was here to see it.

David pulls the Green Lantern figure out of his bag.

He tries to hand it to Martin, but he refuses.

David smiles, and puts the figure back in his bag.

DAVID

I was always terrified to sort of...confront you, about this. Actually talk about, y'know. I never knew how it was gonna play out, good or bad, so I figured it wasn't even worth trying. But I think I'm realizing that...sometimes I actually can have my life go the way I want it to. And sometimes I can't. Some things are just inevitable. And, I hate that. (*shrugs*) But some things aren't. And that's life, right? We're not supposed to plan every moment perfectly...just what we can.

MARTIN

No we're not.

DAVID

And that's ok. And some moments just...turn out perfect on their own. (*beat*) Congrats on Llama, by the way. It's exciting.

MARTIN

That it is. An exciting new chapter.

DAVID

(*nods, beat*) But is it too late to change the name?

Black out.

Now.

The End.